

Caesaris fūnus

Translate the first paragraph and answer the questions below on the second

Quīntus in gradibus templī stāns magnam pompam cōspexit in forum prōcēdentem. magistrātūs feretrum ferēbant, in quō iacēbat corpus Caesaris. in medium forum prōcessērunt feretrumque prō rōstrīs dēposuērunt. Marcus Antōnius, Caesaris

5 amīcus, rōstra ascendit et ōrātiōnem ad populum habuit. Caesarem laudāvit, coniūrātōs vehementer accūsāvit, populum ad furōrem excitāvit.

ubi Antōnius ōrātiōnem cōnfēcit dēscenditque dē rōstrīs, hominēs ubīque clāmābant et furēbant. duo hominēs, quī prope

10 rōstra stābant, gladiīs armātī facēsque manibus tenentēs, ad feretrum accessērunt. feretrum facibus accendērunt. aliī accurērunt et virgulta in flammās iēcērunt; aliī subsellia rapuērunt et imposuērunt. mox ingēns pyra ardēbat et corpus Caesaris flammīs cremātum erat. deinde manūs hominum ē forō

15 cucurrērunt coniūrātōs quaerentium, certī mortem Caesaris vindicāre.

fūnus funeral

feretrum bier

corpus body

rōstrīs the Rostra

vehementer violently

furōrem madness

furēbant ran mad

facēs torches

virgulta (n. pl.) brushwood

subsellia (n. pl.) benches

cremātum burnt; manūs bands,

gangs; certī resolved

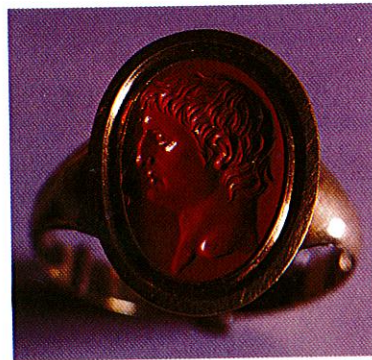
vindicāre to avenge

- 1 What was the effect of Antony's speech on the crowd? [2]
- 2 What did the two men standing near the platform do? [2]
- 3 How did other members of the crowd react? [4]
- 4 What did the men who ran from the forum intend to do? [2]

THE END OF THE REPUBLIC

A key moment in the long drawn-out death of the Roman republic occurred in 60 BC. As we saw in chapter 21, the three most powerful men of the time, Julius Caesar, Gnaeus Pompey and Marcus Licinius Crassus, joined in an alliance known as the First Triumvirate. They made it clear that nothing would stand in their way and, when he became consul in 59 BC, Caesar made sure that nothing did. The Triumvirate was supported by the army, the knights and the people, and so the senate was unable to oppose it. Nobody paid any attention to Cicero's frantic appeals to save the republic.

Over the next decade Caesar fought his famous and brilliant campaigns in Gaul (France, Holland and Belgium), through which he established a justified reputation as one of the greatest generals in the history of the world. He ensured that his military genius gained a wide circulation by writing his own history of his campaigns in the seven books of his *Commentaries of the War in Gaul*. These show him not only as a great general but as a fine war correspondent. They are direct and plain in style but always exciting. His two raids on Britain (in 55 and 54 BC) proved of



Mark Antony

little lasting value but had all the glamour of perilous journeys into the unknown. However, the situation at Rome was less happy for him. The alliance between Pompey, Crassus and himself, all of them ruthlessly ambitious, lasted a surprisingly long time; it threatened to dissolve in 56 BC, but the three met and patched things up. Crassus, however, was killed in Parthia in 53 BC (see the end of chapter 21), and Pompey became more and more closely allied to the senate. Caesar and Pompey were being driven further apart, and the senate voted on 1 January 49 BC that Caesar, who was still in Gaul, should lay down his command.

Caesar's response came on 10 January, when he brought his army into Italy. This was really a declaration of civil war since it was treason for a general to enter Italy at the head of an army. Caesar fully realized the great significance of what he was doing. He spent one hour in solitary thought. Then he crossed the river Rubicon, which marked the frontier between Gaul and Italy, and exclaimed '*iacta ālea est!*' ('The die is cast!')

Pompey and most of the senate withdrew across the Adriatic to Greece. Caesar defeated Pompey's supporters in Spain, then followed him to Greece and in 48 BC won a great victory over him at Pharsalus. Pompey fled on horseback and succeeded in escaping to Egypt, but was stabbed to death as he landed. Ptolemy, the boy king of Egypt, sent his head to Caesar, hoping to win favor with him, but the victor was revolted and distressed by this grisly gift.

Other wars were to follow – including the lightning campaign in Pontus in Asia when he polished off his opponents there with the celebrated boast '*vēnī, vīdī, vīcī*' ('I came, I saw, I conquered'). He had a notorious love affair with Cleopatra, the irresistible Egyptian queen. He was by now the most powerful man in the Western world, and, great statesman that he was, he embarked on a series of major reforms and a vast building program. Yet many worried that he was taking so much power into his hands. He was appointed dictator, first in 49 BC and then for life in February 44 BC. Though he refused the title *rēx* (king), he put on the purple robe worn by the Tarquins, and his supreme power struck many as intolerable. A conspiracy to assassinate him led by Marcus Brutus and Gaius Cassius succeeded in 44 BC. His mutilated body fell at the foot of the statue of his great opponent Pompey, as you have read.

It was now the task of his friend Marcus Antonius and of his great-nephew and heir Octavian to avenge his death.

Write a paragraph describing Julius Caesar's thoughts as he sat by the Rubicon.



Octavian